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ABSTRACT

This report provides a first-hand description and analysis of reforms initiated in the administrator-preparation program at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM). USM is one among eight public and private institutions in Mississippi that are currently redesigning their administrator-preparation programs in accordance with state mandates and the needs of their students. USM's initial reform proposal was not accepted by the state panel, causing reform efforts at USM to be accelerated, with the help of the university's administration. Teaching loads were reduced so that faculty could focus on reform provisions, and a consulting team helped the faculty recognize the necessity of reform and outlined the means for achieving meaningful change. Subsequently, the department began to think in terms of what students coming through the program should know and be able to do. Working groups were formed and the consultants conducted a variety of professional-development sessions for faculty. Using feedback from this review, the department revised the written proposal and submitted its final proposal, which received formal approval. Central to USM's program was its model for preparing school principals, which focuses on four values: student-centeredness, reflection, transformational leadership, and ethics. (RJM)

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State-Mandated Reform of Programs Preparing School Principals: One University's Experience

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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Abstract

Since the early seventies, practitioners and scholars have routinely alleged the lack of relevance and effectiveness of programs training today's school leaders. In the now seminal report, *Leaders for America's Schools* from the national Commission of Excellence in Educational Administration, the 505 university training programs in this nation are sharply criticized for their overall inadequacy and boldly challenged to reform radically or to shut down (Griffiths, Stout, & Forsyth, 1988, p. 21). Programs preparing administrators across this country are responding to calls for radical reform. This author provides herein a firsthand description and analysis of her department's experiences with imposed program reform . In addition, the author describes key features of the new program designed to be in consonance with the recommendations most often found in the literature on the improvement of educational leaders.

Introduction

A decade has now elapsed since the publication of *Leaders for America's Schools* (Griffiths, Stout, & Forsyth, 1988) in which institutions preparing school leaders were challenged to reconceptualize and reform their programs. Since that time, there has certainly been no shortage of additional reform literature regarding school administrator preparation. In particular, several individuals and organizations have issued major policy statements on (a) the focus, scope, and content of programs preparing administrators (e.g., Ashbaugh & Kasten, 1992; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Murphy, 1992) and/or (b) the competencies that today's educational administrator should meet in order to be considered "safe to practice" (e.g., Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1993).

As society and schools change, methods for teaching students and for leading those who teach students must also change if maximum educational outcomes are to be realized. Hence, there is "the need for: more direct and immediate linkages of preparation programs with the field; coordination of developmental activities through some broader agency; and attention to the social-political environments that tend to inhibit change" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1985, p. 1).

Consequently, many (e.g., Daresh & Playko, 1992; Murphy, 1992; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1985) have recognized the need for new ideas regarding the approaches to preparing educational leaders. In the estimation of some (e.g., Griffiths et al., 1988), the need for reform of administrator preparation

programs is not only a good idea, but a critical one. This sentiment has recently been supported by at least one empirical study (Haller, Brent, & McNamara, 1997), the findings of which suggest that school leaders who complete graduate training programs in educational administration are no more effective at producing desired school effects that their counterparts who have not been privy to these training programs.

Reflecting on the shortcomings of current programs for training administrators, Murphy (1992) noted, "It is difficult to analyze the state of affairs in administration programs without becoming despondent. . . . [W]e must be about the business of changing things dramatically" (p. 137). However, others (e.g., Jacobson, 1990) have predicted a much slower and gradual move toward reform. Whatever the case, the effects of the educational reform movement on the preparation of educational administrators cannot be ignored. As Jacobson (1990) noted, "the first swell of this latest wave in educational reform is on us [,] and those of us in educational administration must begin to consider how we intend to respond when this wave crests" (p. 42).

Research reports investigating the efficacy of various types of educational leadership preparation programs do not exist (Daresh & Playko, 1992). Nevertheless, many universities and colleges have recently completed or are now in the process of attempting radical change in their approaches to leadership preparation. (See, for example, Milstein's [1993] collection of the "success stories" of a number of institutions who have initiated such reforms.)

In several states (e.g., North Carolina, Mississippi), initiatives have been

implemented to reform administrator preparation programs. In the state of Mississippi, for example, state standards (i.e., professional competencies) for school administrators were developed (Mississippi Department of Education, 1997) which closely mirror the administrator standards developed by several of the national organizations (e.g., Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1993). The state further mandated that all programs within its borders develop reconceptualized administrator preparation programs based on the recommendations of a statewide study group (Mississippi Administrator Preparation and Certification Task Force, 1994). These study group recommendations addressed a variety of program issues, including selection of candidates for programs, curricular guidelines, development of assessments to rate student competence during and upon exit from programs.

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) is one among eight public and private institutions in the state of Mississippi that are currently redesigning their administrator preparation programs in accordance with state mandates and the individual needs of their students. The USM model for reform aims to encompass the "best elements" common to the various agendas for reform discussed above while tailoring a program to the needs of potential educational leaders in Mississippi and to the unique philosophy of the institution. The description of USM's experience with program reform which follows, is not intended as "the one right way" to approach program reform, but rather is presented as an illustration of how the current reform efforts can be utilized effectively for program planning.

The Reform of a Program Preparing Principals: USM's Experience

The process of reform in any educational setting requires attentiveness to "the primacy of the culture of the organization in defining the character and quality of the climate of an organization" (Owens, 1991, p. 168). As Whitaker and Moses (1994) have noted:

> *In the final analysis, restructuring is a reinvention of the culture of schooling, a rethinking of taken-for-granted assumptions, and a quality improvement effort that refuses to be deterred by the past. It is nothing less than mental and emotional turmoil . . . .* (p. 158)

Just as K-12 restructuring efforts have proved to require a strong grass-roots dimension if significant improvement is to occur, program reform in higher education must also have a strong internal, site-based impetus if it is likely to succeed. Because each university and department has its own uniqueness, often referred to as *culture*, no one model for program reform is likely to work equally well in all situations. For this reason, it is important to understand the context of a particular program reform experience.

As previously noted, reform of programs preparing principals in Mississippi was a state-initiated effort. The effort, spearheaded by the Mississippi Department of Education (K-12), began in the early 1990s and culminated in the spring of 1997 with a nationally assembled panel's review of each university's written proposal for its master's level program of administrator preparation. The instructions to the universities for developing the written proposals they were to submit to the panel for review were vague,

poorly written, and not sent until two months before the written report to the panel was due. USM 's proposal was primarily a plan for phased-in change rather than a description of a changed, reformed program, and it was deemed unacceptable by the panel. Thus, it was not until USM received its stamp of non-approval that its reform process was kicked into high gear. Since last spring, the department has received an appreciable increase of backing and support (financial and otherwise) from the university's president and other administration to enable the department to intensify its work on program reform.

Would reform have occurred without the shock treatment of the panel's lack of acceptance of our proposal? Thomas Kuhn (1962), in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* contends that crisis is often the only thing that brings about major change. He describes how old paradigms frequently blind us to new ones that could greatly enhance what we do. In forming its response to the state mandate, USM certainly intended to put a renewal process in place and to follow through with its proposed plan of incremental, phased-in change. However, the extent to which the program was redesigned and certainly the time frame for the reform were dramatically altered as a result of the program's crisis event. Another major, positive consequence of this crisis was a commitment by the university's top-level administration to generous funding for the reform process as well as to increased funding for operating a new, more costly program. The resources the department had to reform its program were quite limited before the shock waves created by the panel's negative feedback to USM's proposal. A key part of the silver lining of this grey cloud has been the positive, helpful

response from the university's president and administration, the community, and district practitioners in the university's service area. This support has been reassuring and motivational for the department in its efforts to stay upbeat and positively focused despite the demoralizing circumstances of the reform and proposal review process.

Top-down, state-initiated reform of university-based programs flies in the face of today's trend toward site-based change initiatives; however, with state and universities working in tandem for reform, such efforts have great potential for success. Experience has shown that the best possible circumstance for positive change in an institution or organization is when top-down and bottom-up efforts are collaborative. This collaborative model was articulated in Mississippi (Mississippi Administrator Preparation and Certification Task Force, 1994), but not operationalized. Unfortunately, the state's approach often seemed hostile and adversarial to the universities who felt left out of the process and poorly informed most of the time. To begin with, the state made the assumption that all existing programs preparing principals for certification in the state were not acceptable. Thus, the call was made for reforming *all* programs in the state without regard for or differentiation among the quality of existing programs nor among the competency of the various programs' graduates. The lead consultant hired to head up the state's reform of programs preparing administrators and the national panel of "reform experts" were assembled by the state with no input from the universities. Furthermore, the role of these for-hire experts and consultants has been one of judging and grading rather than providing assistance and support to universities in their efforts to reform.

"If we want goals to proliferate, we need to create a climate hospitable to them and to the hard-working individuals who can help us reach them," sagely cautions Mike Schmoker in ASCD's 1996 publication entitled *Results: the key to continuous school improvement.* He goes on to quote Peter Senge (1990), "If we want better results, we need to look beyond the isolated point or moment or result and into the system that affects the impact we can have. And right now, that system is insensitive to the fact that people work best in a climate that creates high expectations but mitigates against personal threat" (Schmoker, p.27). The turmoil and wasted, negative energy resulting from the latest state-driven initiative to reform administrator preparation in Mississippi certainly gives credence to this unheeded warning. And where has the state's Board of Higher Learning been throughout this strained process directed by the state's superintendent of K-12 schools? They have remained very quiet on the sidelines, never once running interference for their university charges.

USM's Department of Leadership and Research has a history of stability and professorial longevity. In the past two decades, the department has had two departmental chairpersons, one of whom continues in the chair position. Up until 1995, the EDA faculty consisted of four senior professors with 15+ years in the department and two "junior" members with 5 to 10 years on staff. The faculty's thorough and close acquaintance with the university's culture, the surrounding districts' schools and personnel, and the community, gave many of them advantages few departments are apt to have. Furthermore, USM's programs in education have always withstood the scrutiny of national accreditation standards (e.g., NCATE, SACS); in fact, it was among the first

institutions in the state to receive NCATE accreditation on its first attempt. The department's faculty provides outstanding leadership in educational administration across the state and region. Both the faculty and quality of the program have always enjoyed a reputation among the students and area school districts of being among the best available anywhere.

This stable, productive culture, however, also proved to have its downside. The primary problem this culture may have created for the department was its reliance on program credibility based on past performance which, in turn, contributed to a sense of adequacy within the department and across the administrative hierarchy in the university. The department grew accustomed to continuing to do more and more with no additional allocation of resources. Program renewal had not been formalized nor systematically operative for many years in the department. Research, service, teaching, curriculum coordination and development, and professional development were primarily left up to individual faculty members working on their own rather than as members of a departmental team. Faculty advising loads over the years had risen to an unmanageable number, especially for senior faculty, without a similar increase in departmental resources and additional faculty. The department's heavy teaching and advising loads precluded sufficient attention to anything else, program renewal included, even if it had been a departmental objective.

Whether or not the president and other administration would have responded to a formalized plea from the department or college dean on behalf of the over-worked department before its problems were thrown into high-profile from the negative report of

the national panel is unanswerable at this point. The department's senior members and chair speculate that without these crisis circumstances, additional resources were not likely to have been given to the department. Whatever might have been makes for interesting speculation, but-regardless of these moot possibilities-the fact is that the department found itself thrust headlong into an embarrassing, rather defenseless position when the panel made public their unfavorable rating of USM's proposed program of principal preparation--essentially a description of the existing program (that had NCATE's full endorsement) with a plan for implementing a reform process.

Truth was, painful as it may be, the institution had not taken the state's reform mandate seriously enough, did not allocate adequate resources to undertake the degree of reform needed, underestimated the urgency of the situation, and did not seek adequate assistance with the process before it found itself in a crisis state of potentially losing its approval to prepare administrators for state licensure. It was in the midst of this demoralized state that the department began its serious attempt at program reform in the summer of 1997.

USM's Process of Program Reform

Making the Commitment:A Necessary Beginning

At this point (spring of 1997), the university administration (under the leadership of a brand new president who never once flinched in offering his support or stating his highest expectations for this program's revitalization) and the department made the decision to commit the substantial resources necessary to redesign completely USM's principal preparation program and to resubmit a newly forged, top-quality program to

the national panel in the spring of 1998. (At that time, the national panel, under the auspices of the state, will again review revised proposals for principal preparation programs across the state.) With necessary financial backing in hand, the class loads of EDA faculty were immediately reduced to allow time and focused energy to be committed to the reform initiative.

Developing a Collaborative Team: The Agony of Starting Over

EDA faculty began to identify the key people needed if the program were to be its best and to enlist the support and involvement of these people in the reform process. Meetings were regularly scheduled and included, at various times, EDA faculty, college and university level administration, EDA student representatives, and area school practitioners. A "Leadership Advisory Board" comprised of school practitioners and EDA students was fully activated. Members of this board were enlisted as equal partners in the reform effort.

At first the meetings were difficult. The group's mental and emotional turmoil was frequently the focus in these early summer meetings. If the group were ever to move forward, a paradigm shift in thinking had to occur. Faculty had to put aside their wounded pride and allegiance to the old program with which they had strong identity and comfortable familiarity, and then work together to reconceptualize a new program to meet the challenging needs of today's school administrators. This was not easy; but it was not supposed to be. As Whitaker and Moses explain in *The Restructuring Handbook: A Guide to School Revitalization,* "Paradigm shifts cause cultural dissonance. Groups encountering cultural dissonance are apt to exhibit some predictable

behaviors " (1994, p.26.). The USM group experienced all of these behaviors--denial and avoidance, impatience with others, heightened fear, hasty decision making and acquiescence, and much frustration and wanting, but not daring giving into the desire, to quit.

Getting Help: The Ecstacy of Moving On

To move beyond an initial stage of what seemed to be immobilization, a decision was made to invite in a team of nationally renowned colleagues experienced in program reform to come immediately and help the group move past these negative behaviors and set in motion a process for the tough, but exciting, work that lay ahead. This three member team was titled NTACT--National Technical Assistance Consulting Team--and was engaged to consult with the department throughout the first year of reform work. The team came initially for three days in July, 1997, and literally jump-started the stalled process. Their optimism, insight, excellent information, and leadership skills were just what the reform effort needed. While they were on campus, they also met with the President to reinforce the department's need for continued support and backing. The reform work was finally on its way with faculty and partners beginning to let go of the past and embrace the excitement and possibilities of a new program with resources and backing unlike the department had ever known.

Organizing for Work: Moving Upward

The consultants were able to do what no one in-house had been able to do (and perhaps, could never do as in-siders): convince *everyone* of the necessity of their participation in the work of program reform. The key to this accomplishment was the

consultants' facilitation of the group's focus on the department's mission - the important work of preparing educators for school leadership. To this end, the department began to think in terms of what *students coming through the program should know and be able to do*; this was an important shift in thinking that moved from focusing on information-dispensing to maximizing students' growth and competency.

As a result of their first 3-day visit, the consultants had also helped the group to establish a number of working groups with designated leadership: a Steering Committee to provide oversight, congruence, and coordination to the process that meets regularly; a Program Design Committee that met initially for several weeks to articulate more specifically the group's values, leadership vision, and program mission, and ultimately to design a program model to guide further program development; three Instructional Design Teams that continue to develop the integrated blocks of curricula based on the program's articulated vision, mission, and program model; and an finally, an Internship Committee that meets regularly to develop this key component of the new program. Faculty, of course, serve on many committees. This is essential, however, to coordinate the reform efforts and to insure a well-articulated, cohesive program.

In addition to this initial assistance, the consultants have conducted a variety of professional development sessions for faculty and the entire reform partnership as needs have arisen (e.g., sessions on "Improved Collaboration Processes", "Integrating the Curricula", and "Portfolio Development"). Professional development of the faculty is an important component of the reform process that must be on-going and a part of the continuing renewal process for the proposed program to succeed.

Conducting the Review of USM's New Program Proposal: A Second Time Around

Because the work of program reform is complex and multi-dimensional, the task of the department in early 1998—after a summer and fall of intensive program reform work--was to fit the many pieces of USM's new program into a coherent document that accurately reflected the rigor and quality of the group's dynamic new concept of principal preparation in order for the state's appointed panel of reviewers to be able to grasp accurately both the process and the product. A first draft of the proposal was finally completed by the department and arrangements made for a *mock review* by the consulting team who had assisted the department in the process and one reviewer who had been formerly associated with the process as a member of the State Department of Education. The mock review was conducted as similar to the real review as possible. The mock reviewers were given specific instructions regarding their mission and role and were asked to be as critical and scrutinizing as possible in order to ferret out weaknesses in both the contents and construct of the written program proposal. This review occurred in April of 1998.

Using the feedback from this very thorough review, the department revised the written proposal and submitted its final draft to the State's nationally assembled panel of reviewers in early May of this year. Within two weeks, the panel scheduled an on-site visit to conduct the formal review of our new proposal. At this formal review, LAB partners, one of the department's consulting team members and even some students joined the faculty for the review process. This show of support was particularly

reaffirming to department faculty and vividly demonstrated the team spirit which had developed as a result of the collaborative process implemented by the department in its approach to program reform. The program received formal approval of its proposed program in mid summer, 1998. Although the USM group believed it would indeed receive approval based on the quality and rigor of the process and product of the reformed program and also based on the constructive comments of the review panel during their site visit and formal review, there was a great feeling of relief and accomplishment upon receiving formal notification of the program's approval.

A Reconceptualization of Administrator Preparation

The University of Southern Mississippi's educational administration faculty, students, administrators, University colleagues, and area school district partners collaboratively developed this program for preparing school principals, an innovative and radically different approach to educating and training entry-level school leaders grounded in the national standards for school administrators and the state's Administrator Preparation and Certification Program Development Principles. Central to USM's program preparing principals is a vision of leadership steered by a passion for students' welfare and learning. USM's model for preparing school principals is characterized by its central focus on four values: (1) student-centeredness, (2) reflection, (3) transformational leadership, and (4) ethics. The importance of today's school leaders keeping a focus on students' needs and achievement is reflected in program content and processes which model this value in a thorough student screening, selection,

and admissions process a prescriptive approach to individual student program planning with an assigned University advisor and a practitioner mentor, reliance on up-to-date, "best practices" for adult learners including cohort enrollment, an integrated block curriculum with team-based instruction, frequent field-based activities, and a highly participative role for students throughout the program.

The valued practice of reflection is demonstrated in the program's use of student-developed portfolios containing frequent essays analyzing and interpreting their experiences, personal growth, and skill development. Reflection is fundamental to both many class and field activities in order for students to synthesize and apply knowledge and skills in problem-solving situations. Greater reliance in general on constructivist pedagogy in a cohort arrangement sets the stage for mental deliberation requiring careful listening and higher order thinking.

Transformational leadership, another of the USM model's focused values, is represented in the state and national standards and the related proficiencies identified by these professional groups as essential for school principals in the new millennium. These skills, knowledge, and dispositions that make up USM's core curriculum and learner objectives come directly from these recently developed, nationally recognized standards based on transformationally oriented (more than on the more traditional, transactionally oriented) leadership attitudes and behaviors needed for today's complex organizations and diverse society.

Students' development of a written, philosophical education platform that will be

a part of their professional portfolio is an important program component. The expectation for students to revisit and refine their platforms periodically throughout the program is intended in part to help them deal directly and developmentally over the two years of the program with ethical dimensions of leadership, the fourth and last of USM's core values on which its reformed program is based. The problems and case studies in the curriculum also give students many opportunities to link articulated beliefs and values to administrative practices and decision-making that frequently involve moral dilemmas for school leaders.

Taken together, these four core program values form a powerful alliance undergirding a program and faculty poised to prepare strong, proactive school leaders with the skill, knowledge, and disposition to transform today's schools into citadels of student success.

USM's Principal Preparation Program is conceptualized to reflect essential, significant shifts in the basic premises on which schools and school leaders operate. The following assumptions undergird USM's program design and development:

> Schools should be open, caring, collaborative communities of learners involving all stakeholders in their operation.

> Schools should cultivate healthy risk-taking and positive change for growth of children and adults.

Principals must be transformational leaders.

Principals must be PROACTIVE.

Student success should be performance-based and central to the school's operation.

Conceptual Model of USM's Program of Principal Preparation

The USM Principal Preparation Model for Values-Centered Leadership illustrates the interrelationship among the program's key components and grounding principles beginning with (1) an admissions process to screen for qualified candidates, (2) an integrated approach to organizing program content, (3) reliance on selected processes for effective program delivery, (4) an emphasis on selected values in leadership, and (5) the use of the four major domains of principal proficiencies recommended by the National Policy Board for Educational Administrators in guiding the program's development.

Program Design and Schedule

The USM program's visual model (See Appendix) illustrates the interaction of program content and process with the content based on the knowledge, dispositions, and skills identified by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and by the state in its Mississippi Administrators' Standards and Indicators document as being essential for today's

principal. Our program's processes break with traditional programs of principal preparation by relying on many forms of internal and external collaboration including University-school district partnerships, team-teaching among faculty involving adjunct faculty as clinical professors in organizational blocks rather than in courses, organization of program around cohort groups of students, more reliance on constructivist approaches to curriculum and pedagogy, field-based experiences strategically and developmentally placed throughout the program from the first semester through the year-long internship, and greater regard for performance-based assessment of students. While these characteristics break with traditional programs preparing administrators, they are consistent with and supportive of the recommendations contained in Mississippi's Administrator Preparation and Certification Program Development Principles.

The program consists of 36 semester hours of course credit with an additional requirement of an internship of 6 to 12 additional semester hours. The full-time program begins with the fall 1999 semester in which a cohort group of students (maximum of 25) enrolls in Block 1 as full-time students (not concurrently employed full time), followed in the spring semester by Block 2, in the summer by Block 3, followed by the internship occurring in the second year over both fall and spring semesters. The part-time program option begins with a cohort group enrolling in Block 1 in the summer 1999 semester, Block 2 in the fall and spring semesters, Block 3 in the summer semester followed by the internship occurring over a full school year through fall and spring semesters. The two programs are identical in content, sequencing, structure and

delivery with the only difference being that Block 2 for part-time students is spread over two semesters rather than one as in the full-time students'.program. The part-time program is scheduled to allow students who are employed full time to take heavy loads in the summer and lighter loads in the fall and spring semesters. The integrity of the program will be maintained in both cohort group experiences.

Consistent with the department's vision and mission, USM's Principal Preparation Model for Values-Centered Leadership targets the development of proactive principals who are student-centered, reflective, ethical/trustworthy, and transformational. As illustrated in the model, these themes provide basic grounding and design principles recommended by the State which thread throughout the program, facilitate its integration, and are embedded in the four major domains of principal proficiencies described by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration as the interpersonal, the contextual, the programmatic and the functional domains. These domains are defined in Principals for Our Changing Schools: The Knowledge and Skill Base (1993), a document intended as a "flexible design . . . or template for preparation, inservice, or certification programs. Although the domains are not intended as separate courses," the authors contend that "they can be tapped as strands of a cross-disciplinary program, or for a problems-of-practice approach" (p. xv). In USM's program of principal preparation, the domains are integrated throughout the program with individual domains of Contextual, Programmatic, and Functional providing a curriculum focus for each of the three blocks of USM's integrated program content with NPBEA's fourth domain, the Interpersonal, being unilaterally emphasized throughout

the program.

Organization and Sequencing of Integrated Curriculum Blocks

Block 1 - The Landscape of Leadership - 12 sem. hrs. credit

This block's focus is on students more fully understanding themselves as potential leaders, becoming a cohort team, and further developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which an educational leader must possess to deal effectively with changing school and community environments. Students gain insight into the school and community environments and into various contextual factors that influence the educational setting. Concepts explored include leadership theory, organizational oversight, self-understanding, educational philosophy, and research consumerism.

Block 2 - The Principal as Instructional Leader - 12 sem. hrs.

The second block builds on Block 1's emphasis on the landscape of leadership by focusing on the heart of principals' work: increasing students' skills and ability to plan and implement school improvement and a program of instruction centered on student learning, achievement, and success. Concepts included in this block of integrated instruction to facilitate students' understanding are improving teaching and learning; curriculum products, processes, and issues; professional development; targeting student success through measurement and evaluation; and action research.

Block 3 - The Principal as Manager - 12 sem. hrs.

The third block targets students' understanding and skill in managing key organizational processes for facilitating the instructional program and nurturing teaching and learning in the school community. Developmentally, this block serves as synthesizer of the preceding two blocks by focusing on management functions as tools for principals, as instructional leaders, to operationalize the goals and central mission of the organization of the school: student success. Central concepts include leadership accountability; human, fiscal, and material resource management; school improvement; school law; and educational equity.

Year #2 - The Internship - 6 to 12 sem. hrs.

The second year of the program is designed for students to develop their skills and further apply and synthesize theory and the knowledge base through more intensive, individually constructed field-based experiences facilitated by a team comprised of the practitioner-mentor, a university advisor, and designated field-based supervisors.

The ordering of the instructional blocks is sequenced developmentally to accommodate increasingly complex program objectives. In addition, each block contains developmentally appropriate field-based experiences to facilitate students' full understanding of each block's knowledge content (i.e., making observations in a district and shadowing a principal in order to complete a written contextual analysis of a district in Block 1; actually assisting a district with personnel functions in the summer in Block 3).

Because of the importance of field-based experiences from the outset of the program, in the first semester students will be paired with a practitioner-mentor who will work with the student and university advisor throughout the program in developing the student's individual program plan and facilitating the field-based experiences of the student.

The block's conceptual themes flow from content topics that facilitate each block's learner objectives. Thus, the curriculum maintains a strong student-centered focus. The block's instructional teams are strategically assigned to match the expected student competencies and skills related to each block.

The Current Status of USM's Program: Implementation

The work of reform, of course, was not over with the completion and official approval of the new program's proposal. The real test of the USM group's tenacity and skill still lay ahead in the implementation of this proposed program tentative set for summer of 1999. Work on implementation began formally in the fall semester of this year with the author appointed as key facilitator of program reform and given a reduced class load to compensate for this assignment. Other core educational administration faculty members were also given some reduction in class loads to enable them to participate more fully in further development of the new program.

As this paper is being written, curriculum for the newly conceived, integrated block semesters in the new program is being developed day-by-day. The department's practitioner partners, the Leadership Advisory Board, continues to meet regularly to assist with the many facets of program implementation including admissions

procedures, recruitment strategies, field-based experiences and internship arrangements, and curriculum development. Curriculum materials are being reviewed and ordered weekly; brochures explaining the new program are currently at the printers and will be mailed to all districts, schools, and key professional organizations by the end of October; searches for new faculty are being conducted; meetings to keep university administrators informed and resources secured are continually being anticipated, orchestrated and attended; time-lines of things-to-do and key benchmarks to ensure the program will be implemented in a timely, competent manner are continually being revisited and revised as a strong monitoring tool for the department to coordinate the multi-faceted work of reform and to stay on target. The first co-hort of students for the new program is to be enrolled for this coming, 1998 summer session.

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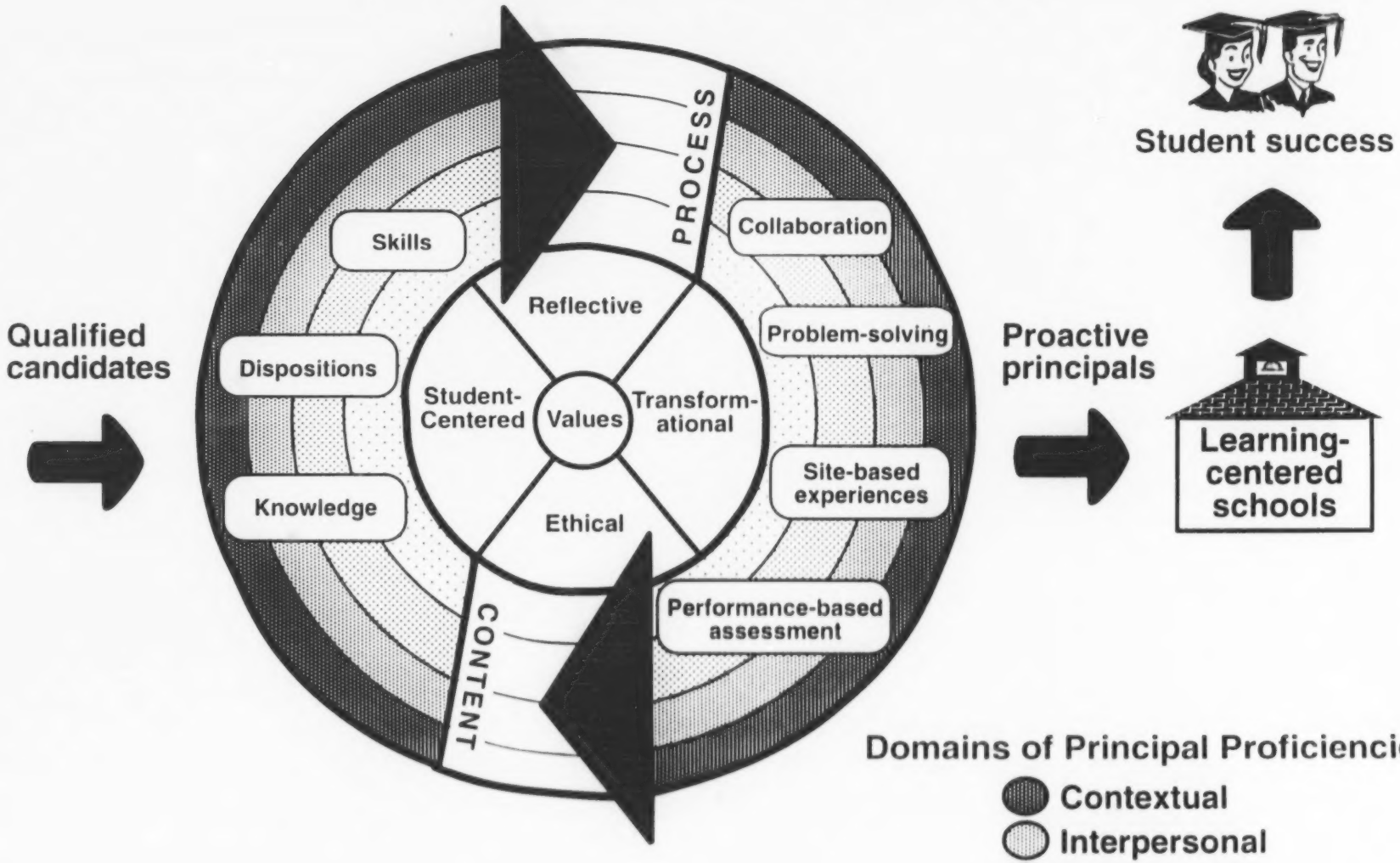
University of Southern Mississippi's Principal Preparation Model for Values-Centered Leadership



SAMPLE CLASS SCHEDULE FOR BLOCK ONE

(To Be Determined Collaboratively by Block Faculty and Student Cohort)

Week	Block Themes	Block Objectives	Topics	Meeting Time
1	#3	#2,3,11	Charting the Course	M-T-Th 8:30-3:30
2	#3	#2,3,11	•PBL - "Write-Right" •Assignment - 1st Draft of Philosophical Platform	
3	#1	#1,4,5,6,9	Transformational Leadership for Student Centered Schools	M-T-Th 8:30-2:30
4	#1	#1,4,5,6,9	•Field-based Assignment - Principal Interviews & Shadowing (Individual)	
5	#1	#1,4,5,6,9	•Problem-centered Activity - In-Basket Simulation #1	
6	#5	#12	Utilizing and Interpretation of Research in Educational Leadership	
7	#5	#12		
8	#2,4	#4,5,7,8,9,10	Social & Multicultural Contexts •Case Study: 6.7 - "The Multi-Cultural Literature Project" •Field-based Assignment - Context Analysis of a School District (Group-based)	T-W-Th 8:30-2:30
9	#2,4	#4,5,7,8,9,10	Legal & Political Contexts of School Leadership •Case Study: 6.15 - "The Commencement Prayer"	
10	#2,4	#4,5,7,8,9,10	Resource Realities of School Leadership	
11	#2,4	#4,5,7,8,9,10	The Technological Contexts of School Leadership •District Site Visit to Observe Technologically Enhanced Operation •Training in Use of Power Point	
12	#1,2	#1,4,5,6,7,9,10	Oral & Written Expression for Effective Leadership •Problem-centered Activity - Memo Writing Exercises	T-W-Th 8:30-12:00
13			Decision-making for Student-centered Schools	
14	#2,4,5	#4,5,7,8,9,12	•Case Study: 4.2 - "Would This Be Good for My Kids?"	
15	#1,3,4	#1,2,3,4,5,6, 7,8,9,10,11	Ethical Dimensions of School Leadership •Case Study: 4.6 - "The Lie About Class Size"	
	#1,2,3,4,5	#1,2,3,4,5,6,7, 8,9,10,11,12	Introduction to Problem-centered Curricula •PBL: "Framing & Solving Problems"	
16	#1,2,3,4,5	#1,2,3,4,5,6,7, 8,9,10,11,12	Assessment and Reflection Block Products •Group Presentations of 'District Contexts' Analysis Using Power Point (Research Project) •Portfolio Contents •Philosophical Platform •Written Examinations of Knowledge Base •In-Basket Simulation •PBL Analyses •Case Study Analyses •Individual Diagnostic Profile of Principal Proficiencies [Self/Peer Instructors Mentors]	M-T-W-Th 8:30-3:30

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•Special Activities and Assignments